

# STATE OF THE CITY AWARDS

## 2021







Dear Friends of South Salt Lake,

Our once overlooked city has steadily been gaining favor. We are becoming a small city with BIG opportunities. In the past decade, South Salt Lake has grown to embody our “City on the Move” tagline as we have risen from our industrial roots and legacy neighborhoods to become a bustling urban village. Take a look all around – our move to becoming a vibrant, diverse community is not by chance. Many people, businesses and partners are now discovering South Salt Lake and making it their home. It is you, our hard-working and caring community who have made it so appealing and enduring.

No doubt, with so many options for housing, schools, businesses, and recreation, South Salt Lake is the place to be. Our views are breathtaking, our neighborhoods are fun and close to everything, and our parks, trails and amenities keep getting bigger and better. Now that our downtown is booming with big cranes, big construction and big plans, we are getting noticed. But not just for the big stuff – we are also being recognized for staying the unique small town we have always been. Our diversity is our secret. We honor people for who they are, invest in their future and share their successes. Thus we have our annual Best of South Salt Lake awards tradition.

Every year at the State of the City presentation, I take stock of where we have been and what we have accomplished. This year was exceptional. It was nothing less than hard work, grit, fearless persistence and seizing opportunities. We mastered the pandemic pivot and are here in 2021 with a whole new outlook. We had to cancel this event last year, but return with even more to be thankful for. The list is long as there are so many to thank for surviving and thriving through a tough year. You have made South Salt Lake truly the BEST.

It is my honor to bring to you the Best of South Salt Lake awards, the 2020 and 2021 edition. These are the people, partners, places and success stories that make South Salt Lake so special.

With gratitude,

Mayor Cherie Wood





A close-up photograph of several bundles of lavender flowers tied together with thin purple ribbons. The bundles are resting in a light-colored, woven wicker basket. The background is softly blurred, showing more lavender and a wooden surface. A semi-transparent dark purple rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text "2020 AWARD WINNERS" in white.

# 2020 AWARD WINNERS







# 2020 LEGACY FAMILY OF THE YEAR

## THE DAHIR FAMILY



An incredible story of persistence - the Dahir family has continued to make an impact and succeed, especially in the face of adversity this past year. The Dahirs are a legacy in the making.

In the early 90's Ali and Fatuma Yussuf fled Somalia for a refugee camp in Kenya. Fatuma was first to arrive in America while pregnant - with twin girls.

Education has always been the priority. Nearly all of the children have attended Promise afterschool programs while attending South South Lake schools, and then worked for Promise SSL.



These first-generation students have made a huge splash, and hard work and perseverance are traits that each member of this family embodies. Collective accomplishments of these high achieving siblings include - our Youth City Council Mayor, a student body president, a Gates Scholar, Legacy Scholars, an engineer, a surgical technician, a poet, activists and future doctors and health educators. Also, Ahmed has been a part of our general plan stakeholder committee this past year.

Our 2020 Legacy Family of the Year is the Dahir Family!

# 2020 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

## LISA BURKE

After retiring from a 40 year career with UTA this past year, Lisa applied for a part-time gig with our Recreation Department and Senior Center. She now drives our Senior Citizen bus two days a week and is adored by all those with whom she interacts.

Lisa is a dog lover! She advocated for and visits the Lions Park dog park nearly every day – even taking time to clean up after others.

She spoke at a City Council meeting, and requested a new sidewalk when her neighborhood friends weren't able to enter the dog park by wheelchair.

She brought her smile to those spending months in isolation as she delivered hundreds of meals to homebound seniors during the pandemic.

Lisa Burke is the neighbor we all want and our 2020 Citizen of the Year!



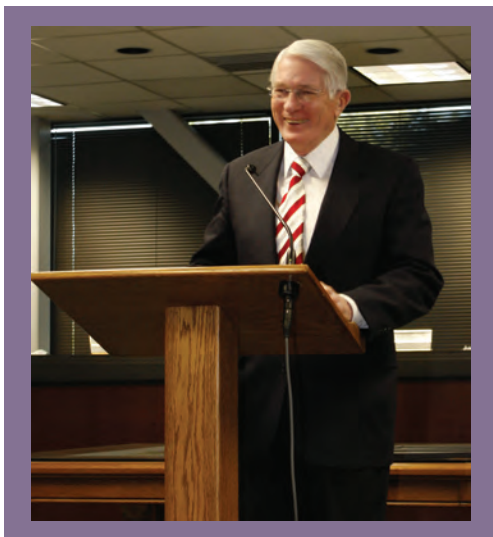


# 2020 SENIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR ROY TURNER

Roy Turner has lived, worked, and served all over the world; but perhaps some of his most significant work has been right here in South Salt Lake.

He served on the City Council from January 2008 to January 2016 and took his responsibilities seriously. Roy was a strong force on the Council, always advocating for the residents and their needs. He was willing to speak up, whenever the occasion warranted.

Roy – your many years of service to your congregation, neighborhood, and our city, makes you the Senior Citizen of the Year!





# 2020 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

## LISA PRICE

Ms. Lisa Price is someone who understands the value of true education, not just academic success. In addition to her work as a 5th grade teacher at Moss Elementary, she spends many hours each week with Promise SSL afterschool youth. She tutors students in math and helps them get back on track. She is extremely supportive of Promise staff, taking time out of her own schedule to plan lessons and teach sessions on Common Core math.

This past fall she assisted students in writing and performing their own original school play called “A Day at Moss.” It was the highlight of the school year!

We are extremely thankful for the work that Ms. Price does for both the students at Moss Elementary as well as Promise SSL.

Our 2020 Teacher of the Year is Ms. Lisa Price!





# 2020 YOUNG LEADER OF THE YEAR

## SEVARA FREDERICO

As a 7th grader, Sevara Frederico learned of the effects of plastics on the environment and the economy, and in 2020 shared her ideas to reimagine garbage and recycling with Mayor Cherie Wood. Sevara came up with an idea to place informative labels on the lids of our SSL recycle bins. I am pleased to report that Ace Recycling put these stickers on our South Salt Lake cans!

Sevara is currently educating the public about single use plastics and recently spoke at a City Council Meeting. This 9th grader captivates a room when she speaks! Sevara is now on our General Plan committee and shares her perspective as a young person growing up in a changing city. Keep your eye on her – she's going to make a difference!

Sevara Frederico is our 2020 Young Leader of the Year!



## RECYCLING NEWS

February 2018

**SOUTH SALT LAKE**

### YOU CAN NOW RECYCLE WEEKLY

South Salt Lake residents are now recycling in greater numbers than ever. Many of you requested more opportunities to do so. We heard you and I am excited to announce that we now have weekly recycling service on the same day as garbage pickup at homes enrolled in the city's garbage program through ACE Disposal.

The best news is that the city can provide better service for the same price. We negotiated a new contract with ACE Disposal and the additional recycling service was built into our current costs.

We have also heard your interest in green waste bins and glass recycling. Unfortunately, those services are still not cost-effective to provide without an additional fee. I welcome your suggestions to make these services more convenient.

I would love to hear your thoughts on these services - just reach out.

mayor@ssl.com  
801.464.6757

Thank you!  
*Mayor Cherie Wood*



### South Salt Lake is Recycling

by Sevara Frederico

Labels on residents' recycling bins only tell half of the story, with vague recyclables, like "Mixed Paper" and "Plastics #1-7" when residents need a bigger picture. Some things to think about:

Receipts from grocery stores are thermal paper, which can be but shouldn't be recycled because receipts are made from BPA plastic, which, when recycled, release harsh chemicals into the environment.

Plastic bags from grocery stores, though being a plastic #2, are non-recyclable, and should be put in grocery bag recycling bins at retailers. An alternative to consider are paper bags, which can be recycled in curbside recycling bins. Reusable bags are another option.

While the importance of recycling is always stressed, residents are often left guessing what they can recycle with only two guidelines - paper and plastic. Such broad guidelines can leave residents asking, what can they really recycle? Valuable websites include information about recyclables and non-recyclables, and labels placed clearly on top of recycling bins can help too.

Sevara Frederico is a seventh-grader who lives in South Salt Lake. We welcome her comments and enthusiasm about this topic. The South Salt Lake recycling info on the reverse side was spurred by her request.

### Need to know more?

Contact Utilities  
utility@ssl.com 801.483.6074



# 2020 UNITED WAY & PROMISE SSL PARTNER OF THE YEAR LEARNING FOR LIFE

The success of our work in Promise SSL is strong partnerships. Beginning in the fall of 2011, the Learning for Life organization has provided daily programming for lower elementary-aged students in our Promise South Salt Lake afterschool programs. Their work is a pillar of strength in the school communities, fueled by the expertise and energy of mature and responsible staff. They provide such necessary early learning literacy development that at times they are referred to as “child-whisperers.” A number of the staff are ambitious high school students with notable GPA’s and impressive career goals. They are adored by afterschool staff, faculty and the youth they serve.

Thank you for making a difference for SSL youth and families!  
Our 2020 United Way & Promise Partner of the Year is Learning for Life!





# 2020 PROMISE SSL INNOVATION PARTNER BEST BUY

The Best Buy Teen Tech Center officially opened in fall 2019. As you can imagine, the flurry of activity there had to take a pause due to the pandemic, but it is now gaining steam again. The teens just hosted their first ever Design Showcase, and are in the midst of finding internships to put their creative and tech skills to work through the Clubhouse to Career program.

Simply put, it is a cool place for teens to learn and the first of its kind in Utah!

If you haven't seen this space in person, I encourage you to do so! It's in the courtyard just across from the auditorium, right here at Columbus. The technology is mind-blowing!

Thank you to Best Buy for your remarkable commitment to our teens and for making South Salt Lake a more innovative city. You are our 2020 Promise SSL Innovation Partner!





# 2020 COMMUNITY BUILDER

## KAREN WILEY

For over 30 years, Karen worked for Salt Lake County, much of that time as the coordinator of the Community Development Block Grants.

She saw both the need and the opportunity in our community and became one of our biggest fans. Karen has been a cheerleader for Promise SSL, Community Connection and CDBG projects.

She championed the Fitts Park expansion by coordinating efforts among the federal government, county, and our city to get the property designated as a park, and the money secured to build all the fun stuff: the zip-line, bike safety course, fitness course, and Mill Creek Trail.

She is proof that one person really can make a difference. Karen Wiley is our 2020 Community Builder and we wish her well in her retirement! Congratulations!





# 2020 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

## ARIEL ANDRUS

Ariel began working as the Deputy City Recorder five years ago and has become one of the most valuable employees in our city hall.

She expanded her duties to providing administrative support to the Legal Department and she helps with city events. In 2020, she became the city expert on making city council and planning commission meetings happen over zoom.

In her “spare time” she served on a Municipal Clerks Association Committee to update the handbook to include current state legislation.

In addition to her quality, prompt work, she is cheerful and always willing to help with any task. Ariel Andrus has earned this honor as our 2020 Employee of the Year!





# 2020 COUNCIL CHAMPION

## PORTIA MILA



After many years of volunteer work for city activities and committees such as the SSL Chamber of Commerce, Honorary Colonels, and the Planning Commission, Portia was elected to the City Council in 2015. She endured a lot of tough meetings and decisions on the council and still decided to run again in 2019. She prevailed with 67% of the vote! District 4 knows they can count on her to represent their interests.

Portia is also a dedicated professional in her day-job, which often puts her on the road, but she makes certain to call-in for City Council meetings and promptly responds to citizens via email, social media, a phone call - you name it. She never misses a beat!

Portia represents a very engaged neighborhood around the Granite High school property, and has made it a priority for citizens' voices to be heard, especially in the face of the many controversies over that property.

Portia is approachable, values resident engagement, and cares deeply about the city she serves. I am proud to make Portia Mila our 2020 Council Champion!





# 2020 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

## JASON EKSTROM

Jason has been volunteering with South Salt Lake Recreation for over 6 years – coaching soccer, basketball, and flag football.

He goes out of his way to make sure every child – including his own 3 kids – are included and that every family is part of the team.

Jason has a knack for magically healing the bumps and bruises that happen as children play. If a player goes down, often they are back up, laughing and ready to play again if Coach Jason is on the scene.

The hard work and dedication to the youth of our community make Jason Ekstrom the 2020 Volunteer of the Year!





# 2020 EQUITY CHAMPION

## FIRE CHIEF TERRY ADDISON

Not too long ago, at a Promise STEM Fest with students, a little girl approached one of our SSL female firefighters volunteering at the event with intrigue. Confused, the girl said, “I thought only boys could be firefighters?!?”

Well, not in South Salt Lake!

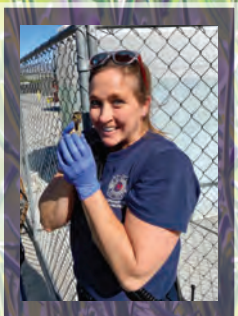
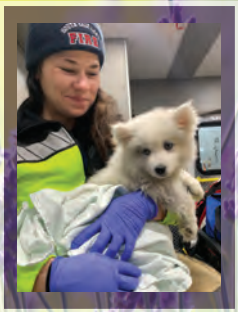
When Terry Addison became Fire Chief in 2019, he wanted members of the community to see themselves reflected in the first responders they met. He wanted youth and residents from all backgrounds to see firefighting as a career possibility for themselves, too.

Chief Addison talked openly about his goals to increase the number of women firefighters in South Salt Lake, to overcome perceptions that firefighting is a male-dominated career, and ensure that women felt welcomed into a safe work environment.

Since he took over, the fire department has hired 21 new firefighters, five of whom are female. This represents a 500% increase in women hired over the previous year.

The number of female firefighters in SSL is nearly six times higher than the national average. Thanks to Chief Addison, SSL is leading the charge to create inclusive and representative fire houses.

Our 2020 Equity Champion is Chief Terry Addison!





# 2020 BEST LOCAL ARTIST

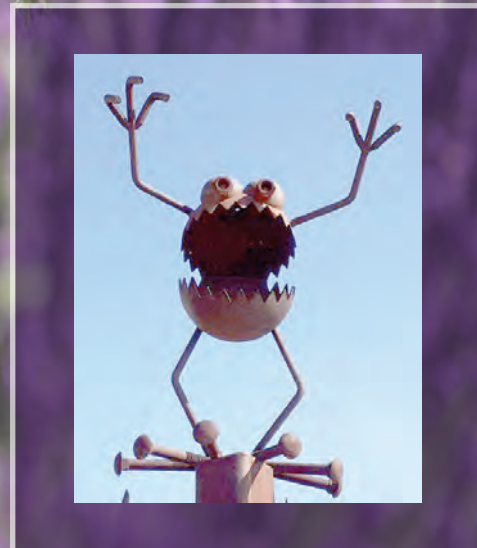
## SUGARPOST

Before the Creative Industry Zone was even a thought, Sugarpost was there, gnomes and all, representing all things fun and funky!

These talented makers describe their products as reactionary, whimsical, and pretty much irreverently awesome – and I agree!

If you travel down Truman Avenue, you'll see an assortment of metal works and creatures made from reclaimed or repurposed metal. You will also see their Mural Fest 2019 artwork and can take a peek into their "little shop of wonders."

Sugarpost is one of the first and one of the best of our creative industries, making them South Salt Lake's Best Local Artist for 2020!





# 2020 BEST BUSINESS VOLUNTEERS MARRIOTT VACATIONS WORLDWIDE CORPORATION

Marriott Vacations has been a consistent force for good in our community due in large part to their volunteer coordinator, Tracy Henson. Their huge contingent of 50 to 60 volunteers are skilled, tireless, and not afraid to get their hands dirty. Even more importantly – they're a whole load of fun!

The results of their efforts can be seen in our parks, most recently Central Park. In 2019 they planted trees, tended to landscaping, and spruced the place up. We appreciate their efforts and that they make it look like a vacation! Marriott Vacations Worldwide Corp. you are our 2020 Best Business Volunteers!





# 2020 BEST BEST CREATIVE INDUSTRY

## LEVEL CROSSING BREWING COMPANY

Mark Medura knew he wanted to create a space where beer, art, and music would cross paths. He found just that in a 1980's warehouse located under our iconic water tower.

With a background in distilling, he had the business mapped out. He and his investors planned for growth and were all in from the onset.

Mark has poured his heart and soul into the tap room and 15-barrel brew house as he and a crew of devoted friends remodeled the space.

Features include: exposed brick, hand finished woodwork, metal accents, and my personal favorite – Dallas Alice – a 1946 Chevy truck converted into a stage!

Have a seat on the outdoor patio and take in the view of the neighborhood that Mark has worked so hard to build.

Despite a year of pandemic restrictions, Level Crossing is back, as busy as ever, and just as tasty!

Their sense of community, neighborhood values and customer service make Level Crossing Brewing Company the 2020 Best Creative Industry!





# 2020 BEST LEGACY BUSINESS ORSON GYGI Co.

In 1945, the Orson H. Gygi Company was founded by its namesake, an experienced and successful salesman, Orson Gygi.

Having grown up in poverty, Grandpa Gygi knew what it meant to work hard, to show up and to hustle. With his picture on the wall, he still oversees the future of The Orson Gygi Company.

This family owned and operated a restaurant wholesale and kitchen supply store that has been operating in South Salt Lake ever since, except for a 2-year period during a remodel due to a fire. Gygi, as many call it, has been at their current location since 2000.

Today the business is overseen by Orson's grandson, Brad McDonald, General Manager; I look forward to welcoming the 4th generation of leadership, Heather Smith.

People come from all over the valley to shop and take classes at Orson Gygi! It's a destination, especially during the holidays. Whether it's at their brick and mortar store or online, if you want to be a rockstar in your kitchen, Orson Gygi has it!

Congratulations to the 2020 Best Legacy Business – Orson Gygi Company!





# 2020 BEST FRIEND OF YOUTH

## FREE BIKES 4 KIDS

Without a doubt the best thing on 2-wheels in SSL is Free Bikes 4 Kidz Utah, often referred to by the initials F-B-4-K. This group of cyclists enjoys giving as much as they do riding. They take dusty, rusty bikes, refurbish them and hold giveaways for youth all across the valley.

For many kids, this is their first ever opportunity to have a bike. They make certain every kid has a bike, a helmet, and is ready to ride safely.

They have partnered with Promise SSL to give our youth the freedom of transportation and the joyful experience of riding. We are grateful that Nick Ekdahl and his team are keeping our youth On the Move!

The 2020 Best Friend of Youth is Free Bikes 4 Kidz!





# 2020 BEST RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

## HAWTHORNE TOWNHOMES

Located between West Temple and the TRAX line on what was once an industrial cinder block factory, Hawthorne Townhomes has built a community with its own unique character.

219 new townhomes have created a true neighborhood on this 20-acre site. The two-story townhomes have attached 2-car garages and expansive 9 to 11 foot ceilings plus modern designs.

The development includes a pool, community garden, dog parks, open spaces, trails and even a quaint new café and crepery, that is yet another bright spot on a tasting tour of West Temple.

Not all developments build in a sense of community, but our 2020 Best Residential Design winner sure feels like home. Congratulations to Hawthorne Townhomes!





# 2020 BEST TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

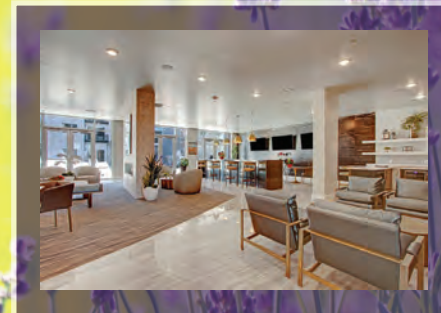
## RITZ CLASSIC APARTMENTS

You know you have arrived at Ritz Classic Apartments when you see the iconic bowling pin on State Street. The bowling alley may be gone, but the iconic sign remains. When you enter the lobby and are greeted by a spiral staircase, you quickly see this complex is a STRIKE!

The project makes the most of its walkable location on the S-Line streetcar corridor. Featuring open space on top of the parking structure, the interior has an entirely different perspective from the exterior. Amenities include a pool, hot tub, patio with grills and an area to entertain guests, a bocce ball court and a massive turf area for pets to play.

Ritz has stepped into this vibrant neighborhood in style. Weidner Apartment Homes hasn't just built a project, but a place!

The 2020 Best Transit Oriented Development design is Ritz Classic Apartments!





# 2020 BEST LUNCH SPOT

## SAKURA HIBACHI

Chinatown on State Street has become a true hotspot in South Salt Lake and has gained a reputation for great food. Sakura Hibachi is one of the latest and greatest restaurants at the shopping center. Sakura isn't just simply a place to eat but a place to be entertained, too. After everyone gets seated around a large tepanyaki grill, the show begins. The cook starts with a few jokes, then a few tricks, and then starts teasing his audience. Soon you are laughing with your mouth full and before you know it, several courses of grilled meats, veggies, and rice have been served to all, along with appetizers and salad to make sure you taste just about everything they have to offer, including sushi.

If this review sounds a little too outrageous to believe, check it out online and read the rave reviews - it is a great meal for a special occasion or a lunch with coworkers or friends.

Just plan ahead as word is getting out about the 2020 Best Lunch Spot Sakura Hibachi Steakhouse & Sushi!





A close-up photograph of several bundles of dried lavender flowers. The bundles are tied with thin, light-colored twine and are nestled in a light-colored, woven wicker basket. The lavender flowers are a vibrant purple, and their green stems are visible. The background is softly blurred, showing more lavender and some white fabric. A semi-transparent dark purple rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text "2021 AWARD WINNERS" in white, serif, all-caps font.

# 2021 AWARD WINNERS





# 2021 UNITED WAY & PROMISE SSL PARTNER OF THE YEAR UTAH COMMUNITY ACTION

Utah Community Action is consistently an amazing resource, as they support Housing and Case Management, Head Start, and Adult Education programming. As a dedicated Promise SSL Partner, UCA worked hard during the pandemic, and to continue to support students and families in South Salt Lake. One service that particularly stands out were the free meals which were provided for the youth (fresh, good food, and also formula and diapers for infants) at our Central Park Head Start location.

Many parents mentioned how picking up meals was a godsend in assisting them through this time. This message was shared from a family's curbside experience last summer during quarantine, "THANK YOU for doing this, going to pick up meals has become our activity and outing for the day. We get bathed and dressed and ready to go get lunch. Then we come back home or stop at a park and eat it. It has made all the difference in the world for us and it's what we look forward to each day." UCA truly stepped in to support our residents who were struggling to stay afloat.

The 2021 United Way & Promise SSL Partner of the year is Utah Community Action!





# 2021 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

## NEILE HILL

Detective Neile Hill started at South Salt Lake Police Department in 2009. He has always been the “go to guy” to get things done. In every position that he has held he has taken pride in it and exceeded in it. After 11 years of service, he still works as hard as the first day he started. Detective Hill is the senior Detective at this time and has tackled pretty much every type of case that the City of South Salt Lake can send his way. Detective Hill currently is handling person’s crimes. This includes our robberies, aggravated assaults and murder.

It is common to see Officers in the office talking to Detective Hill and getting advice on how to better work the initial case. It also is common to see Detective Hill at his desk typing away. This includes weekends and Holidays. Detective Hill never misses a call-out and is always available by phone, even when he is off duty. Detective Hill gets very passionate about the cases he works and goes above and beyond in all his assigned cases.

Detective Neile Hill truly is our 2021 Employee of the Year!





# 2021 COMMUNITY BUILDER

## LELA'S LITTLE FREE PANTRY & LIBRARY



Lela's Little Free Pantry & Library was inspired by the now 15 year old Anela Stinson, who since a very young age has always possessed a strong desire to give back. Being a bibliophile, she realized that not all people have access to libraries or can gain a library card (it's harder than you think). Her mom Christina assisted young Lela in building the little library, stocking it with books from their own collection or books donated by members of the community. Due to the increased needs of the community in 2020, the family again rethought this little library as an opportunity to help a little more, and opened up a free food pantry, with snacks and other food items for anyone, students, neighbors, or any passers by.



"Let your faith be bigger than your fear," is the theme of Lela's Little Free Pantry and Library. Our hearts were touched by Lela and the Stinson family's efforts in building a better community by going the extra mile, and giving with no strings attached. Lela's Little Free Pantry & Library is our 2021 Community Builder!

If you feel inspired by this message, please donate! Lela's Little Free Library can be found at: [littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org), charter #112888, and at 185 E Gregson Ave, South Salt Lake.



# 2021 COMMUNITY CHAMPION

## LAURIE HOPKINS

Laurie Hopkins is the CEO of Shelter the Homeless, (the owner of the Mens' Resource Center). They are committed to homeless advocacy and to creating systems and structures that facilitate changing the trajectory of individuals experiencing homelessness. The goal: equitable, low-income housing for all.

Laurie advocated for SSL in securing shared land that was once a hot spot for illegal camping, and sustained a strong commitment to maintaining compliance with the Conditional Use Permit. She has genuinely invested in the success of the MRC, while mitigating and minimizing its impacts on the surrounding community. With the inclusion of the MRC, South Salt Lake is now exemplary in the larger, statewide homeless resource system.

The 2021 Community Champion is Laurie Hopkins!





# 2021 EQUITY CHAMPION

## EDUARDO CHACON

South Salt Lake is a place that welcomes everyone - and the Columbus Center is where many of us come together, every day. Behind the scenes there is a team of people making sure that our buildings stay open, safe and welcoming.

When COVID-19 hit, we needed the support of the Facilities team to keep us going. In particular, one name comes to mind: Eddie Chacon. You know when staff have his contact information saved as “Eddie the Superhero” that he was critical to our mission. Eddie was on everyone’s speed dial. From extra bottles of surface disinfectant to paper towels to mouse traps, Eddie was always there when we needed him.

As the months went by and testing and vaccine clinics were being held at City buildings, Eddie stepped up once again. He was always there sanitizing, setting up and staying late to make sure everything was where it was supposed to be. We could not have run our programs throughout the pandemic without Eddie!

Eduardo Chacon is the 2021 Equity Champion!





# 2021 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

## EDWARD LOPEZ

Edward Lopez has been working with Promise SSL for seven years and truly embodies serving others, personally and professionally. Giving much of his time, talents and connections to raise others up, many of us not only appreciate, but we genuinely enjoy working with him. Edward's smile is contagious, and if you didn't know, he has an incredible, operatic voice. When asked to create a virtual sing-along holiday video for the Interfaith Council, not only did he run with it, he performed as well, singing Auld Lang Syne.

As a leader, Edward is both a mentor and friend to our Youth City Council, and truly to all our young residents. Over the past year, he took on many extra public communication assignments, and being fluent in both English and Spanish, was extremely valuable in keeping our Spanish speaking residents informed, engaged and connected to resources. He also spearheaded our Promise Benches for a Mental Health project.

Edward Lopez is known for being an advocate of the most vulnerable and to those who have the highest needs in our community. In essence, he brings a voice to those who are underrepresented. Edward is a problem solver, and often finds a solution when others have given up. We are so fortunate to have him not just as a part of our team, but as a resident of our community, too!

Our 2021 Citizen of the Year is Edward Lopez!







# 2020 ROCK STAR EMPLOYEES

Vedad Lelo - Urban Livability

Ariel Andrus - City Recorder

Tracy Swenson - Community Development

Tori Smith - Promise SSL

Adrian Ruiz - Police

David Slack - Fire

Monica Medina - Justice Court

Julie Taylor - Urban Design

Patricia Ervin - Finance

Lingkun Li - Engineering



# 2021 ROCK STAR EMPLOYEES

Alavini (Vini) Pututau - Public Works

Monica Mejia - Justice Court

Calvin Henninger - Urban Design

Crystal Makin - Finance

Karen Hampton - Urban Livability

Neile Hill - Police

Taylor Greenwell - Community Development

Ian Nelson - Fire

Colleen Bradburn - Promise SSL





A close-up photograph of a field of purple lavender flowers, with some flowers in sharp focus and others blurred in the background. A small yellow butterfly is visible on the right side.

**i3** SOUTH  
SALT LAKE





MAYOR CHERIE WOOD'S  
STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS AND AWARDS  
JUNE 14, 2021

Welcome to South Salt Lake's State of the City! Before we get started, a few thank you's....

Thank you to Rick Taggart, our Emcee for this evening. The Taggarts are Legacy Business owners here in South Salt Lake and I appreciate their strong presence in our community and Rick's willingness to always jump in and help where he can.

Thank you to Police Chief Jack Carruth for leading the pledge and providing a brief summary of the stars and stripes in honor of Flag Day.

Thank you to Rev. Monica Dobbins for her inspiring words of community and connection to each other and to the earth.

Thank you to our Police and Fire Honor Guard for seeing that the colors are posted with distinction.

Welcome to our city council members present, Natalie Pinckney At-Large, Ray deWolfe At-Large, LeAnne Huff District 1, Corey Thomas District 2, Sharla Bynum District 3, Portia Mila District 4.

A huge shout out to our caterer this evening -- As U Wish. I was thrilled to hear that this local small business weathered the pandemic and was able to provide our delicious meal tonight.

Next on the thank you list -- I am fortunate to have assembled a team of talented professionals who work to keep our City on the Move. To my cabinet, thank you for steering your departments in the best of times and especially in the most challenging.

The gathering we are enjoying is a compilation of the talents of our event team -- Julie, Myrna, Jen, Sharen, Charee, Leslie, Elizabeth, Lindsey, Gentry, and Amy. Thank you each for your care and expertise in executing this event!

I have family and close supporters from my tribe here with us tonight. Thank you to my mom for attending and for your example of perseverance, especially over the past year. We have weathered the storm and experienced the loss of my dad. But have emerged stronger.

Lastly, to my three partners in crime who are here tonight. When we started this quite public adventure Jordan was 11, Jayden was 9, and Jaxson was 2. These three have kept me going. I am super proud to be their mom and I'm grateful for the valuable perspective they provide me in this role.

While we have a lot to celebrate today, I want to be mindful of the difficulties that 2020 brought to our small city. We lost 29 residents to Covid-19 who were our friends, family and neighbors. So at this time, I'd like to pause and recognize those residents. Please join me in a moment of silence. Thank you.



## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

2020 was unprecedented in terms of challenges, but our small and mighty city literally weathered all that came at us. We survived a pandemic (closing city hall to public interactions on March 16th), the March 18th 5.7 earthquake (which was the date scheduled for our 2020 State of the City) and September's historic wind storm. In my twelve years as Mayor, I have never had to declare a state of emergency in our city, and last year to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community I did so four times. And to observe how quickly and competently our team managed, quite honestly, was remarkable.

Our success in 2020 didn't just happen by chance. I strongly believe that it came from the foundational work and momentum that we generated from recent years of hard work and foresight. I want to commend our 295 full-time and 53 part-time employees who continued to serve this city remotely on-site or wherever residents needed them most. COVID didn't slow us down—it made us “double down”. I am proud to share that there were no furloughs or lay-offs for any of our City Employees due to the Pandemic and we did not lose one employee to COVID.

So let's take a minute to look back at our accomplishments and the challenges of 2020 as we plan for our future. Here's my “Top 10” list of South Salt Lake's “proudest prouds” for 2020:

1. In the midst of schools going virtual and families experiencing economic, emotional and physical hardships, our Promise South Salt Lake program continued to serve hundreds of our City's youth and even expanded to provide daycare for our essential workers. They also served as connectors to important services like financial coaching, medical services and free meals.
2. Our Economic Development team continued to facilitate positive growth, including the completion and grand opening of South City – our first new office building in Downtown SSL and new anchor to businesses PDQ and GBS.
3. We secured new street lighting on West Temple at Harmony Park, and we are currently under construction with lighting on Main Street – something these neighborhoods sorely needed to enhance safety and livability.
4. Our Community Development team attracted hundreds of housing units to our downtown area surrounding public transit. By broadening the variety of housing in our area we hope to expand affordable housing options so that our kids and grandchildren can live here too.
5. Happy 1st Birthday to the Best Buy Teen Tech Center! Along with their Clubhouse to Careers internship program, their programs are connecting our youth with technology and helping them develop skills needed to advance their education and launch them into professional careers. If you haven't yet seen this space, it is located right here in the wing next to the playground.
6. Our City Council, legal team and Police Department have all supported the development of a Civilian Review Board, which is now awaiting budget approval from the City Council. The creation of this new board was in direct response to the desires of our residents to maintain social justice and equity for all.



7. Our Parks division cut the ribbon on the Ida and Laurie Bickley Park right here at the Columbus Center. And did I mention that our parks and trails received more use than ever in 2020?
8. Did you respond to the Census? We participated in a successful 10-year census count (during a pandemic year!) to ensure that we receive our fair share of federal funding and federal representation in the coming years.
9. Our public safety team provided quick and effective responses in an unprecedented time, during the Pandemic – keeping our residents safe and sound. They didn't stop, and with masks on, they continued serving our community and redefining best practices.
10. We learned how to pivot and continued providing community building traditions like the Halloween "Spooktacular" and Easter Bunny visits by making them drive-through events. Our South Salt Lake Arts Council recently held the most successful Mural Fest event EVER. Now, in its 4th year, our city now displays 35 spectacular murals in our downtown Creative Industries Zone. And on July 3rd we will be having our 4th of July, everything stars and stripes, parade. Hope to see you along the parade route.

I know this is a top 10 list but I'm going to add a couple more...

11. I'm so proud to report that we received the Healthy Community Award from Get Healthy Utah. This reflects our investment in the wellbeing of our community. For nearly a decade, we have had the Promise Health Council working to build a healthier community through access to health insurance, attracting free and low-cost health clinics, planting community gardens, advocating for walking and biking, and rolling out a successful program to test and vaccinate for COVID-19.
12. This past July, on what would have been Hser Ner Moo's 20th birthday, In her honor, I stood with her mother to dedicate a new green space next to the S-Line named 'Promise Park'. It was a powerful reminder of how every member of our community is needed and valued. I am so grateful to be surrounded by and to work closely with those who strongly defend and protect the innocent and stand up against racial violence and hate.

## WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2021–2022?

So what's next for our City on the Move? I've always believed that residents know what's best for our community – so we're listening in new ways and more than ever. This year, as part of our 10-year General Plan process, we've been asking residents what they envision for the future of South Salt Lake.

We conducted a city-wide community values survey, conducted on-line surveys, focus groups and small group discussions with more than a thousand residents. We heard about the importance of neighborhoods, parks and recreation, and safe streets. That outreach helped us develop a new vision statement for the city that I believe captures the hopes and dreams of our residents. It reads:



**“South Salt Lake is a community that fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion. South Salt Lake is a city of safe and enduring neighborhoods where people are connected to jobs, vibrant retail areas, green spaces, and each other. As the City on the Move, we take advantage of our unique location and unparalleled transportation options. We are a modern city that is home to parks and green spaces, clean water ways, and sustainable services and policies. South Salt Lake residents embrace diversity, feel part of the community, and share an enthusiasm for their “small city with big opportunities.”**

There’s a lot in store for the coming year. Here are just some of exciting things happening in South Salt Lake:

1. We’ll have a new Department of Neighborhoods - We know the importance of building and maintaining neighborhoods so we re-aligned employees to focus on the things that neighborhoods need most: trees, walkability, animal services, lighting, and more.
2. Plans for a new dog park. Like me, our residents love their dogs! Right now, we have one designated off-leash dog park in SSL, and our plans include acquiring and developing more areas where owners can recreate and socialize with their dogs and enjoy the outdoors.
3. Increased equity through the work of our Equity Council – This Council is doing more than ever in the areas of diversity and inclusion training. They are working with our Youth City Council to consider a new and more inclusive name for the Columbus Center. If you would like to weigh in on this issue please reach out to your district and at large council members as they will be making a decision on the name change in the future. There is also additional information on the city’s webpage.
4. A big part of leveling the equity playing field is by making sure that everyone has digital access. This includes creating new Comcast Lift Zones for free WI-FI at our community centers, creating partnerships to help provide free/low cost devices; and pursuing any and all resources to ensure that all our residents can be online for work, school and their personal advancement.
5. A Community Opportunity Center – We’re creating an innovative co-working space right here at the Columbus Center to allow community members, partners, and non-profit groups to utilize resources, advance their careers and find tools for financial empowerment.
6. We’ll continue to support healthy lifestyles with plans to provide more outdoor recreation opportunities like additional pickleball courts and an outdoor fitness course right here at Bickley Park in addition to the new all-abilities playground.
7. We want to become “greener and cleaner” in the coming year so we’ll start an urban forestry program; implement a stormwater enterprise fund and utility fee to ensure our creeks and the Jordan River are clean and safe; and add new recycling opportunities like glass recycling bins throughout the City with curbside options as well.
8. And I’m so excited about the new library! After years of planning with Salt Lake County, we will cut the ribbon on the new Granite Library, which is sure to be a vibrant and wonderful new addition to our city.

# DREAM BIG

I've learned that if you dream big, you can accomplish great things. As part of our general plan outreach, we needed to hear all voices -- including our youth. So we took the opportunity to reach out to them and asked, "What do you wish to see for the future? Dream BIG!" And like from one of youth, while we won't be able to provide flying cars and cookies for everyone, at least in the near future, we can provide the amenities and desired services that will ensure a safe and prosperous future for you, our residents and businesses.

My vision for the city has always been to Invest in People, Celebrate South Salt Lake, and Build Great, Inclusive, and Safe Neighborhoods.

Here's how we can dream big and do this, together:

1. Let's attract the jobs that allow us to work and live in South Salt Lake. We'll attract new office buildings downtown with quality, high-paying jobs right here in our city.
2. Let's prepare our young residents for the future by investing in the Promise SSL Department. We know how essential the Promise South Salt Lake program is to families and we need to ensure its future by funding important positions through the city so it can become a permanent program.
3. We are a city that values health so let's build a City Recreation Center that provides indoor recreation opportunities year round for those in our community.
4. Residents have told me they want more ways to "Celebrate South Salt Lake." So let's expand our local events (like Mural Fest and CraftoberFest) and create beautiful community gathering places to host them. On our list is to create a new full-fledged Community Arts Center at Historic Scott School.
5. And we should enhance and highlight our natural resources, such as the Mill Creek and the Jordan River with destinations like the Tracy Aviary Nature Center.
6. One of my biggest priorities is a Speed Reduction plan to make South Salt Lake a safer place to walk, bike and drive around our city. Traffic slowing signs...
7. When I dream big, I dream of housing for all. We need to increase housing options for seniors, refugees, young people, students, and families.
8. And, we must attract more small businesses because they are the lifeblood of our city. Our strong, vibrant community will attract more businesses that wish to call South Salt Lake home. And yes, grocery stores! And in the meantime, we need to support existing small businesses and shop locally.



I want to share a story. This spring, three outstanding first generation SSL students -- Jabir Nasir, Asma Dahir, and Anisa Dahir -- became the inaugural college graduates of the Walkways to Westminster program.

In March of 2015, Promise South Salt Lake partnered with Westminster College to facilitate a mentoring program to help give every child in SSL the opportunity to attend and graduate from college. But we also recognize that there are many obstacles to face before getting there. Many of our youth are first-generation or the first in their families to attend college and face more hurdles than most, including having to acquire English as their second language, and overcoming the anxieties, applications and financial burdens associated with that.

To these three, who as sixth graders started in the Promise programs, then worked with mentors as students, became mentors themselves, and now have become the first of our youth to graduate from Westminster and go onto such promising careers is a full circle experience and exactly what we were hoping to achieve.

With our collective vision, you can only hope that in your work, you are developing something that will bring a lasting benefit to the community. It took the vision and hard work of many who are here, and who aren't here, but most definitely it has become one of the most rewarding parts of my role as Mayor, and it should be celebrated!

Our Promise programs working with a partnership such as Westminster is just one of many examples of how our city works to bring services and amenities that truly serve the people. Let's celebrate as we recognize these not so small accomplishments from the past year and give thanks to all of those, our staff, our volunteers and invested stakeholders and especially to you. As we move forward and share our next move, know that you have been heard and have played a big part in the plan and vision all along. Here's to 2021, and to a bright future ahead for South Salt Lake. Thank you.

## 2020 STATE OF THE CITY AWARDS

Now we get to my favorite part of State of the City – recognizing the incredible people who make South Salt Lake truly a community. This year, we have to cover two year's worth of awards since the world went on pause last year, but the good work of our residents, partners and businesses never stopped.

We will start with the 2020 awards, and for the sake of time, I will ask our award winners to stand at their tables while I speak, and at the end of the program this evening I will trade you a trophy for a picture with you. **A more detailed story of each of our recipients is within the Award Booklet.**

## 2020 LEGACY FAMILY OF THE YEAR

As an incredible story of persistence, the Dahir family has continued to make an impact and succeed, especially in the face of adversity. In the early 90's Ali and Fatuma Yussuf fled Somalia for

a refugee camp in Kenya. Since bringing their family to South Salt Lake, education has always been their priority. Nearly all of the children have attended Promise afterschool programs while attending South

South Lake schools, and then worked for Promise SSL. These first-generation students have made a huge splash, and hard work and perseverance are traits that each member of this family embodies. Collective accomplishments of these high achieving siblings include – our Youth City Council Mayor, a student body president, a Gates Scholar, Legacy Scholars, an engineer, a surgical technician, a poet, activists and future doctors and health educators. The Dahir Family is the 2020 Legacy Family of the Year.

## **2020 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

Lisa Burke brought her smile to those spending months in isolation as she delivered hundreds of meals to homebound seniors during the pandemic. She is the neighbor we all want and our 2020 Citizen of the Year goes to Lisa Burke.

## **2020 SENIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

Roy Turner has lived, worked and served all over the world, but perhaps some of his most significant work has been right here in South Salt Lake. Roy, your many years of service to your congregation, neighborhood and our city makes you the Senior Citizen of the Year!

## **2020 TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

Ms. Lisa Price is someone who understands the value of true education, not just academic success. We are extremely thankful for the work that Ms. Price does for both the students at Moss Elementary as well as Promise South Salt Lake. The 2020 Teacher of the Year is Ms. Lisa Price.

## **2020 YOUNG LEADER OF THE YEAR**

As a youth, Sevara Frederico has made an impact by speaking up and sharing her environmental concerns and ideas to reimagine garbage and recycling with Mayor Cherie Wood. Sevara came up with an idea to place informative labels on the lids of our SSL recycle bins, and its making a big difference. Keep your eye on her, she's going places! Sevara Frederico is the 2020 Young Leader of the Year.

## **2020 UNITED WAY AND PROMISE SSL PARTNER OF THE YEAR**

The success of our Promise afterschool program comes from strong partnerships. Learning for Life is a partner making a big difference with youth and their families. The 2020 United Way and Promise SSL Partner of the Year goes to Learning for Life.

## **2020 PROMISE SSL INNOVATION PARTNER**

If you haven't visited the new Best Buy Teen Tech Center, I encourage you to do so after this event. The technology made available to our youth is mind blowing. Thank you, Best Buy for your remarkable contribution to our teens, you are the 2020 Promise SSL Innovation Partner!



## 2020 COMMUNITY BUILDER

For over 30 years, Karen Wiley worked for Salt Lake County and was the coordinator of the Community Development Block Grants which brought the expansion of Fitts Park, and many other valued projects to our community. Karen Wiley is proof that one person can really make a difference and I wish to present to her the 2020 Community Builder award.

## 2020 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Ariel Andrus began working as the Deputy City Recorder five years ago and has become one of the most valuable employees in City Hall. In addition to her prompt work and attention to detail, she is always cheerful and willing to help with any task. Ariel Andrus has earned this honor as the 2020 Employee of the Year!

## 2020 COUNCIL CHAMPION

After many years of volunteer work, Portia Mila was elected to District 4 of the City Council in 2015. Portia is approachable, values residents' engagement and cares deeply about the city she serves. I am proud to announce that Portia Mila is the 2020 Council Champion.

## 2020 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Jason Ekstrom has been volunteering with South Salt Lake Recreation for over 6 years, coaching soccer, basketball and flag football. He goes above and beyond to make sure every child, including his own 3 kids, are included and every family is part of the team. His hard work and dedication to the youth of our community make Jason Ekstrom the 2020 Volunteer of the Year!

## 2020 EQUITY CHAMPION

Fire Chief Terry Addison was vocal about his goals to increase the number of women firefighters in South Salt Lake. And, we can now claim that we have six times the national average. Thanks to Chief Addison, SSL is leading the change to create inclusive and better represented fire houses. the 2020 Equity Champion award goes to Chief Terry Addison!

## 2020 BEST LOCAL ARTIST

If you travel down Truman Avenue, you'll see an assortment of unique metal works and creatures made from repurposed metal. Sugarpost is one of the best local creative industries businesses, and we are awarding them as South Salt Lake's 2020 Best Local Artist.

## 2020 BEST BUSINESS VOLUNTEERS

Marriott Vacations has been a consistent force for good in our community due in large part to their volunteer coordinator, Tracy Henson. We appreciate their efforts in planting trees and in tending our parks. Marriott Vacations Worldwide Corp. you are the 2020 Best Business Volunteers!

## 2020 BEST CREATIVE INDUSTRY BUSINESS

Mark Medura knew he wanted to create a space where beer, art and music would cross paths. He found that in a 1980's warehouse located under South Salt Lake's iconic water tower. Their sense of community, neighborhood values and customer service make Level Crossing Brewing Company the 2020 Best Creative Industry business!

## 2020 BEST LEGACY BUSINESS

People come from all over the valley to shop and take cooking classes at the Orson Gygi restaurant wholesale and kitchen supply store. It's a great destination, especially during the holidays. Congratulations to the 2020 Best Legacy Business, Orson Gygi Company!

## 2020 BEST FRIEND OF YOUTH

Without a doubt, the best thing on 2-wheels in SSL is Free Bikes 4 Kidz Utah. They have partnered with Promise to give our youth the joyful experience of riding a bike of their own. The 2020 Best Friend of Youth Award goes to Free Bikes 4 Kidz.

## 2020 BEST RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

Between West Temple and the TRAX line, on what was once an industrial cinder block factory, Hawthorne Townhomes has successfully built a community with its own unique character. Not all developments build a sense of community, but they did. Congratulations to Hawthorne Townhomes as the 2020 Best Residential Design winner.

## 2020 BEST TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

You know you have arrived at the Ritz Classic Apartments when you see the iconic bowling pin on State Street. Ritz has stepped into this vibrant, emerging neighborhood in style on the S-Line. Ritz Classic Apartments is the winner of the 2020 Best Transit Oriented Development Design.

## 2020 BEST LUNCH SPOT

Chinatown Supermarket on State Street has become a true hotspot in South Salt Lake and has gained a reputation for great food. As a favorite spot to not only eat, but to be entertained, we selected the 2020 Best Lunch Spot as Sakura Hibachi Steakhouse and Sushi.



# 2021 STATE OF THE CITY AWARD WINNERS

## 2021 UNITED WAY & PROMISE SSL PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Utah Community Action is consistently an amazing partner, as they support Housing and Case Management, Head Start, and Adult Education programming. As a dedicated Promise Partner, UCA worked hard during the pandemic, and continued to support students and families in South Salt Lake. One service that particularly stands out were the free meals which were provided for the youth (fresh, good food, and included formula and diapers for infants) at the Central Park Head Start location.

Many parents mentioned that picking up meals was a godsend in assisting them through this time. This message was shared from a family's curbside experience last summer during quarantine, They said, "THANK YOU for doing this, going to pick up meals has become our activity and outing for the day. We get bathed and dressed and ready to go get lunch. Then we come back home or stop at a park and eat it. It has made all the difference in the world for us and it's what we look forward to each day." UCA truly stepped in to support our residents who were struggling to stay afloat. Utah Community Action is the 2021 United Way & Promise SSL Partner of the Year.

## 2021 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Detective Neile Hill started at South Salt Lake Police Department in 2009, and has the reputation as the "go-to guy" to get things done. He has taken pride and excelled in every position he has held. Even after 11 years of service, Detective Hill still works as hard as the first day he began. As a senior Detective, he handles just about any type of case that the City of South Salt Lake could give him. Currently, he oversees "person's crimes" which include serious crimes of a personal nature, such as murder, robberies, aggravated assaults and rape cases.

Police Chief Jack Carruth shared, "Detective Hill's experience as an investigator can be seen in his detailed reports and clearance of cases. You will never catch him in the spotlight, but you will always find him hard at work with his team."

When visiting, it's common to find officers inside the station talking to Detective Hill and seeking advice on how to better work with an initial case. It is also common to watch him busy at his desk, typing away. On duty or off, Detective Hill never misses a call-out and is always available by phone. As is well known, Detective Hill is passionate about his work, and goes above and beyond in all his assigned cases. Neile Hill is the 2021 Employee of the Year.

## 2021 COMMUNITY BUILDER

Across the street from Granite Park Jr. High, is a small white cabinet perched on a post in front of a neighboring home. Marked with the words, "Lela's Free Little Library," inside is a selection of several books available for those who want to take them home to read.

THIS project was inspired by the oldest daughter of the Stinson family, From a young age Lela stinson has possessed a strong desire to give back. Being a book lover, she began to realize that not all people have access to libraries or can gain a library card. Her mom Christina assisted young Lela in building the little li-

brary, stocking it with books, either purchased, recycled from their own book collection, or donated by other community members. In 2020 and due to the increased needs of the community, the family again rethought this little library as an opportunity to help a little more, and opened up a free food pantry, with snacks and other food items for anyone, students, neighbors, or any passers by.

Our hearts were touched by Lela and the Stinson family's efforts in building a better community by going the extra mile, and giving in a way, with no strings attached. If you feel inspired by this message, please donate, we suggest that you reach out to them tonight! Congratulations to Lela's Little Free Pantry & Library the 2021 Community Builder.

## 2021 COMMUNITY CHAMPION

Laurie Hopkins is the CEO of Shelter the Homeless, which owns the Mens' Resource Center facility, she is committed to homeless advocacy and in creating systems and structures that facilitate changing the trajectory of individuals experiencing homelessness towards equitable, low-income housing.

Laurie advocated for SSL in securing shared land that was once a hot spot for illegal camping, and sustained a strong commitment to maintaining compliance with the Conditional Use Permit. She has genuinely invested in the success of the MRC, while mitigating and minimizing its impacts on the surrounding community. With the inclusion of the MRC, South Salt Lake is now exemplary in the larger, statewide homeless resource system. Congratulations Laurie Hopkins, the 2021 Community Champion.

## 2021 EQUITY CHAMPION

South Salt Lake is a place that welcomes everyone - and the Columbus Center is where many of us come together, every day. Behind the scenes there is a team of people making sure that our buildings stay open, safe and welcoming.

When COVID-19 hit, we needed the support of the Facilities team to keep us going. In particular, one name comes to mind: Eddie Chacon. You know when staff have his contact information saved as "Eddie the Superhero" that he is critical to our mission. Eddie is on everyone's speed dial. From extra bottles of surface disinfectant to paper towels, Eddie has always been there when we need him.

As the months went by and testing and vaccine clinics were being held at City buildings, Eddie stepped up once again. He was always there sanitizing, setting up and staying late to make sure everything was where it was supposed to be. We could not have run our programs throughout the pandemic without Eddie, the 2021 Equity Champion.

## 2021 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Edward Lopez has been working with Promise SSL since 2014 and truly embodies serving others, personally and professionally. Giving much of his time, talents and connections to raise others up, many of us not only appreciate, but we genuinely enjoy working with him. Edward's smile is contagious, and if you didn't know, he has an incredible, operatic voice. When asked to create a virtual sing-along holiday video for the Interfaith Council, he ran with it and created an amazing experience.



As a leader, Edward is both a mentor and friend to the Youth City Council. Over the past year, he took on many extra public communication assignments, and being fluent in both English and Spanish, was extremely valuable in keeping Spanish speaking residents informed, engaged and connected to resources. This made a big difference and we appreciate that.

Edward Lopez is known for being an advocate of the most vulnerable and to those who have the highest needs in our community. In essence, he brings a voice to those who are underrepresented. Edward is a problem solver, and often finds a solution when others have given up. We are so fortunate to have him as a part of our team and community and as the 2021 Citizen of the year.

## CLOSING

I'd like to share the 5 Life Lessons I learned from pandemic life:

1. We are adaptable - I believe a successful life comes from a constant readjustment to our surroundings.
2. A positive perspective is powerful - I believe a positive perspective gives you power over your circumstances instead of your circumstances having power over you.
3. Life is not a given - This last year had a way of showing us what really matters in life.
4. Human connection is important. Work can be done remotely with the help of technology but the true collaboration needed to improve and bring a community together comes from interacting with one another.
5. Kindness goes a long way- 1% (Five minute) a day challenge.

Make a phone call.

Send an email, a text, or a hand written note.

Make kindness your superpower!